

Commissioner **KATY** Sorenson

District 8



Greetings from the Commissioner

Dear Citizens of District 8,

Welcome to those of you who are new to the district as a result of the 2000 census and the redistricting process. And hello to old friends.

Miami-Dade County is a wonderful, wild and fascinating place to live. I'm sending you this newsletter to give you an update on activities you might not have read about in the local press, and to let you know what I've been working on. In addition, I want you to know that my office is your office, so I welcome your advice, suggestions and even your complaints. My staff and I are always eager to serve you as best we can.

I have always believed in the concept of "participatory democracy." To those who say "I don't do politics," remember that in the words of child advocate Jack Levine, "If you don't do politics, politics get done to you." It's important and useful to be involved in your county government. I invite you to join us.

Sincerely,

Katy
Katy Sorenson
Miami-Dade County Commissioner
District 8

t r a n s p o r t a t i o n

We all know that traffic congestion is getting worse in all of Miami-Dade County. There are at least two things we must do now in order to have any hope of tackling the problem. The first is identifying a dedicated source of funding for public transit. If we don't, we risk losing millions of dollars in federal funding. The County Commission is currently considering an additional ½ penny sales tax as our local match to be voted on by the electors of Miami-Dade County. I urge you all to support this effort.

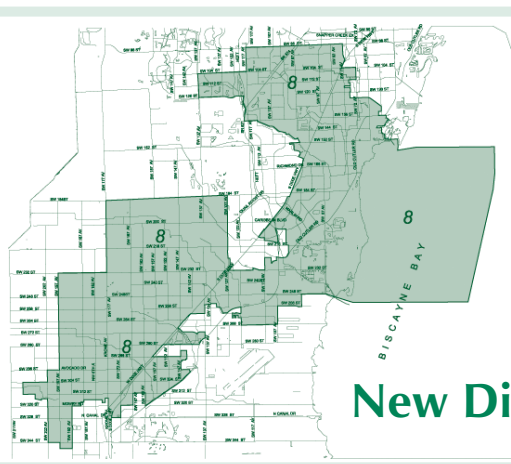
The other thing we must do is to think regionally. I was recently elected Chair of the Regional Transportation Organization which includes representation from Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. We are working on developing a Regional Transit Authority to address the issues of traffic congestion, transit-oriented development for community revitalization, facilitating access to jobs through interconnected transit systems, ensuring efficient access to the ports, and making our communities more livable.



Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson with U.S. Senator Bob Graham in Washington, D.C. Sorenson visited with Congressional Representatives and Senators in March 2002 to advocate expediting the construction of the Modified Water Delivery System and the C-111 canal projects of the Everglades Restoration Plan. These projects will address flooding problems of farmers and urban areas as well as assist Everglades National Park.

South Dade Busway Phase II

Phase I of the Busway has succeeded far beyond anyone's expectations. Phase II, which will continue the Busway to Florida City is scheduled to be completed by late 2004. This will enable riders to travel from Florida City to Metrorail in Kendall, to downtown and all points in between. The Busway opens up our community and provides easier access to jobs and services throughout the county. Most importantly perhaps, the Busway relieves congestion on US 1. Remember, 30 people on a bus means 30 fewer cars on the road.



New District 8 Map

*"We must be the change we wish to see in the world."
- Gandhi*

The crime rate is at its lowest in a decade. While homicides were down 12% countywide last year, homicides decreased in south Miami-Dade by 26%. Robberies were down by 4% countywide, but decreased by 9% in south Miami-Dade. Overall, robberies are at their lowest since 1979. Generally, violent crimes in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, including homicide, robbery, forcible sex offenses, aggravated assault, were down 4% last year, but down 41% from 1996. That's significantly better than Atlanta, Tampa and Washington, D.C. and better than the national average. I am proud of the work of our Miami-Dade Police Department, our Community Oriented Police Program, and our neighborhood Crime Watch groups. They've all had an impact.



Commissioner Katy Sorenson (third from left), Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department officials and community members dedicate Continental Park Walkway on Saturday, December 8, 2001. Sorenson obtained the funding for the 4,5000-foot walkway around the Continental Park, creating a paved path to all areas of the park and making Continental Park handicapped accessible. From left to right: unknown, Mary Williams; Commissioner Katy Sorenson; Holly White, President of Continental Park; Howard Gregg, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, Assistant Director of Planning & Development; Jack Kardys, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, Assistant Director of Operations Management; Roger Hernstadt, Director of Miami-Dade Capital Improvement Department; George Parrado, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, Region 4 Manager and Victor Jenkins, Continental Park Manager.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."
- Margaret Mead

education

The County Commission recently passed a resolution I sponsored supporting a statewide petition drive to require the State to fund voluntary pre-kindergarten education. Numerous studies have shown that the earlier we begin educating children, the better prepared they are to begin school and the more successful they are in completing their education. If the voters approve this effort, led by Mayor Alex Penelas, the state will be required to provide a free, quality, public pre-school education for all parents who want it for their children. Also on the ballot in November will be Senator Kendrick Meek's provision requiring a cap on the size of classrooms. I urge you to support these measures.

Incorporation

At long last, Palmetto Bay will become Miami-Dade's newest city. I supported the incorporation because the agreement approved by the voters will provide some mitigation for neighboring unincorporated areas and because the new city has agreed to stay in the police, fire, library and solid waste districts. The residents now have the chance to participate in the formation of its town charter in a series of public meetings held in the Palmetto Bay area. The constituents I have appointed to the Charter Committee are Mary Cagle, Tom Ringel, Ed Ludovici, Steve Yenser and Paul Schwiep. The charter will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval in June and then to the voters of Palmetto Bay in September.

I have held several town hall meetings in East Kendall, Florida City and Cutler Ridge to discuss incorporation in those areas and have sponsored the establishment of Municipal Advisory Committees for East Kendall and Cutler Ridge. They will meet for about one and a half years and will study whether or not to incorporate those areas. I will also be meeting with constituents in Goulds and Redland about the incorporation efforts and desires in those areas. It's very important that you be aware of the incorporation activity in your area. Look for the public notices of the meetings in the newspapers.

Quality Neighborhood Improvement Program (QNIP)

District 8 has received \$7.5 million dollars this year for street drainage projects, road resurfacing, and parks improvements. Parks projects scheduled to begin are Lakes By the Bay, Coral Reef, Arvida, Cherry Grove, Continental and Gloria Floyd Elementary School.

Charettes

Charettes are planning sessions made up of citizens who develop their vision for the community. They make recommendations to policy makers on how that vision can be achieved. The Goulds and Naranja charettes have been completed. They include development of urban centers along US 1, complete with incentives for businesses to locate in these areas. I was able to earmark \$300,000 in this year's budget for two charettes. One focuses on the Cutler Ridge Business District and the other involves a traffic study in the area of S.W. 87 Avenue and Old Cutler Road. Planning for these two charettes has already begun with the involvement of the Treasure Coast Planning Council and Chamber South.

Community Councils

Community Councils are elected citizens in the unincorporated area who are responsible for zoning and also provide policy advice to the County Commission. I take very seriously the input from the community councils in my district. I encourage you to attend the meetings and see what these dedicated community leaders are doing and saying on your behalf. If you don't know what community council area you live in, call my office and we'll help you.

US 1 Water and Sewer Project

In 1999, I was able to secure \$15 million in the County budget to install water and sewer mains down US 1. That project is proceeding on time and on budget. This infrastructure improvement from SW 216 Street to SW 268 Street will encourage businesses to locate along US 1, a major transportation corridor. The project is scheduled to be completed this year.

South Dade Cultural Arts Center

The groundbreaking for the long awaited South Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center will take place soon, and will be the centerpiece to revitalizing this area. It will be located on six acres next to the South Dade Government Center and across the street from the Cutler Ridge Mall.

Naranja Lakes

In late December, the County Commission approved Traditional Neighborhood Development zoning for Naranja Lakes, in order to promote a mid to high end mixed use, pedestrian-friendly development. The area is bounded by S.W. 268 Street on the north, S.W. 288 Street on the south, the Florida Turnpike Extension on the east and U.S. 1 on the west. The property was recently sold to a developer and will have the benefit of tax incentives to help provide for roads, lighting, water and sewer and other infrastructure needs for the area. I am also investigating the possibility of locating a charter school in the development.

The Former Homestead Air Force Base and Economic Development

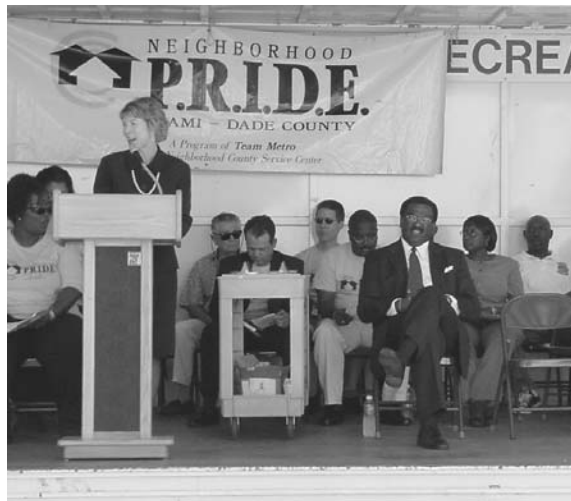
The long battle against locating a commercial airport at Homestead Air Reserve Base is finally over! After seven long years of strong community opposition, the County Commission and the Air Force have ended the possibility of an airport. Congratulations to everyone who participated in this great example of grassroots activism.

Now the hard work begins. We need to develop the base in an economically viable way that will benefit and enhance the quality of life for all of south Miami-Dade and indeed the entire county. I have been

working with several developers who have great ideas for creating good jobs in an enviro-mentally sensitive manner.

Soon I will be co-sponsoring with District 9 Commissioner Dennis Moss an ordinance creating the South Miami Dade Economic Development Agency which will be charged

with overseeing the development of the Base as well as providing advice for economic development in all of south Miami-Dade. We expect to receive the property in the fall and shortly thereafter, there will be a developers' conference to solicit ideas and generate interest in the project. Ultimately, it is my goal to have the project put out for competitive bidding.



The Team Metro Department held its' 2002 Neighborhood Pride Week Kick-Off Ceremony. In Photo (left to right): Commissioner Katy Sorenson and Commissioner Dennis Moss.

Human Rights Ordinance Amendment

The Human Rights Ordinance amendment, which I sponsored in 1998, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment, credit and public accommodations. The amendment is currently subject to a repeal effort and has been placed on the September 10, 2002 ballot. Committed to social justice for all our citizens, I will be working to defeat the repeal. I hope you will join me in voting "no".

e n v i r o n m e n t

Clean City

Last year, I sponsored a resolution designating Miami-Dade County as a "Clean City" in which we reaffirmed our commitment to the Clean Cities Coalition, a public/private advisory board whose role is to provide a fuel neutral policy direction to maximize the use of vehicles operating on clean alternative fuels. I also recently sponsored a resolution requesting that the County Manager look at converting our County fleet vehicles to hybrid vehicles. Hybrid vehicles are powered by gasoline and electricity, and are cost and fuel efficient. If we can convert to hybrid vehicles, we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, improve our environment and save money.



Commissioner Katy Sorenson (left) was the keynote speaker at the Women's History Month Conference 2002, held at Miami-Dade Community College, Kendall Campus March 6, 2002. To her right is Ms. Lucia Obregon, Assistant to Campus President.

c o n t a c t i n f o r m a t i o n

District Office

My District 8 office is in the South Dade Government Center at 10710 S.W. 211th St., Suite 204, Miami, FL 33189. Over 7,000 constituents have called my District Office seeking assistance for everything from Animal Control to Metrozoo inquiries. Please feel free to call my staff at **305-378-6677** during regular working hours at the District Office. My legislative

aides in the District Office are Carol Klingbeil, Jerome Baker and Juan Fernandez.

Downtown Office

My downtown office is located in the Stephen P. Clark Government Center at 111 NW 1st St, Miami, FL 33128. For questions regarding legislative and County Commission issues, call my downtown

staff, Mindy McNichols, Chief of Staff, or legislative aides Kate Kyle and Sheere Benjamin at **305-375-5218**.

You can also e-mail me at **District8@miamidade.gov** and visit my website at **www.miamidade.gov/district8**.

County Commissioner Katy Sorenson

Miami-Dade County
111 N.W. 1st Street , Miami, FL 33128